

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Please cancel claims 6 and 13, without prejudice.

1. (Currently Amended) A porous fluoropolymer membrane comprising a first surface, a second surface, nodes, and free fibrils, the free fibrils having at least two ends, one of which is attached to a node and at least one other end which is unattached to a node; wherein one of the first and second surfaces has a greater number of free fibrils per unit area of the surface than the other of the first and second surfaces.

2. (Currently Amended) A porous fluoropolymer membrane comprising a first surface, a second surface, and free nodes, the free nodes having free fibrils attached, the free fibrils having a least two ends, one of which is attached to a free node, and at least one other end which is unattached to a node wherein one of the first and second surfaces has a greater number of free nodes per unit area of the surface than the other of the first and second surfaces.

3. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, comprising a first surface, a second surface, free nodes, and free fibrils, wherein one of the first and second surfaces has a greater number of free nodes and free fibrils per unit area of the surface than the other of the first and second surfaces.

4. (Original) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 2 comprising a first surface, a second surface, fibrils, and free nodes, wherein one of the first and second surfaces has longer fibrils and a greater number of free nodes per unit area of the surface than the other of the first and second surfaces.

5. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, comprising a first surface, a second surface, free nodes, and free fibrils, wherein one of the first and second surfaces has thinner free fibrils and a greater number of free nodes per unit area of the surface than the other of the first and second surfaces.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, which includes PTFE.

8. (Previous Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, which includes a copolymer of tetrafluoroethylene.

9. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having an average pore diameter of from about 0.03 μm to about 10 μm .

10. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having a porosity of from about 80% to about 90%.

11. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having a thickness of about 4 mils (about 100 μm) or less.

12. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having a thickness of from about 0.05 mil (about 1.25 μm) to about 3 mils (about 75 μm).

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having a K_L (IPA) of about 100 psi (about 689 kPa) or less.

15. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 2, having a K_L (IPA) of about 80 psi (about 551.5 kPa) or less.

16. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, having a K_L (IPA) of about 30 psi (about 207 kPa) or less.

17. (Previously Presented) The porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1, including a filler.

18. (Previously Presented) A composite comprising a support and the porous fluoropolymer membrane of claim 1.

19. (Original) A process for splitting a fluoropolymer membrane comprising:

(a) providing a fluoropolymer membrane having a first surface and a second surface and a thickness;

(b) bonding at least a portion of the first or second surface of the fluoropolymer membrane to a first or second support;

(c) pulling or peeling the first support, the second support, or the first and second supports apart so that the fluoropolymer membrane splits in a dimension different from its thickness dimension to provide a fluoropolymer membrane having a third surface and a fourth surface.

20. (Original) The process of claim 19, further comprising separating the fluoropolymer membrane having a third surface and a fourth surface from the first or second support.

21. (Original) The process of claim 19, further comprising:

(d) bonding at least a portion of the third or fourth surface of the fluoropolymer membrane from (c) to a third or fourth support; and

(e) pulling or peeling the third support, the fourth support, or the third and fourth supports apart so that the fluoropolymer membrane from (d) splits in a dimension different from its thickness dimension.

22. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 19, wherein the fluoropolymer membrane is a PTFE membrane.

23. (Previously Presented) The membrane prepared by the process of claim 19.